

Message Text

CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 01 BRIDGE 01573 032039Z

63

ACTION EB-07

INFO OCT-01 ARA-06 ISO-00 CAB-02 CIAE-00 COME-00 DODE-00

DOT-00 INR-07 NSAE-00 FAA-00 L-03 H-02 PA-01 PRS-01

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FM AMEMBASSY BRIDGETOWN

TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 9510

C O N F I D E N T I A L BRIDGETOWN 1573

E.O. 11652: XGDS (DECLASSIFICATION DATE IMPOSSIBLE TO DETERMINE)

TAGS: EAIR,BB

SUBJ: CIVAIR: AIR TRANSPORT SERVICES BETWEEN US AND BARBADOS

REF: (A) STATE 204943 (B) BTN 1540

1. REF (B) REPORTED CONVERSATION OF AUGUST 28 BETWEEN TWO SENIOR GOB OFFICIALS CONCERNED WITH CIVIL AIR QUESTIONS-- IAN ARCHER, SENIOR CROWN COUNSEL IN PRIMIN'S OFFICE, AND SAM CORBIN, PERMANENT SECRETARY IN SAME OFFICE -- AND DCM SIMMS ON AMERICAN AIRLINES AND ICA APPLICATIONS TO BARBADIAN AIR TRAFFIC LICENSING AUTHORITY (ATLA) AND CAB, RESPECTIVELY. WHILE FORMALLY DENYING THAT ATLA WAS WITHHOLDING ACTION ON AMERICAN APPLICATION BECAUSE OF CAB DELAY IN TAKING ACTION ON ICA APPLICATION, ARCHER MADE IT CLEAR THAT, AS GOB VIEWED MATTER, TWO CASES WERE, IN FACT, LINKED. HE ALSO STATED UNEQUIVOCALLY THAT GOB WAS AWARE OF CONSEQUENCES FOR BARBADIAN ECONOMY IF NO AMERICAN AIRLINE LICENSED TO FLY TO BARBADOS DURING TOURIST SEASON AND WAS PREPARED TO ACCEPT THEM.

2. IF ARCHER'S COMMENTS ARE AUTHORITATIVE (AND WE HAVE NO REASON TO BELIEVE THEY ARE NOT), GOB HAS TAKEN A POSITION WHICH NOT ONLY HINDERS PROGRESS TOWARDS ACHIEVEMENT OF SATISFACTORY ARRANGEMENTS FOR AIR TRANSPORT SERVICES TO AND FROM BARBADOS IN DISREGARD OF ITS OWN BEST INTERESTS BUT ALSO IN-
CONFIDENTIAL

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PAGE 02 BRIDGE 01573 032039Z

VITES A CONFRONTATION WITH USG. SINCE GOB CLEARLY NOT DEALING

FROM POSITION OF STRENGTH, IT WOULD BE EASY FOR USG TO DISMISS THIS IMPLICIT CHALLENGE AND PROCEED AS THOUGH IT HAD NOT BEEN MADE. EMBASSY BELIEVES, HOWEVER, THAT BOTH EQUITY AND FURTHER-ANCE OF US INTERESTS IN BARBADOS AND CARIBBEAN GENERALLY CALL FOR MORE FORTHCOMING RESPONSE ON PART OF USG.

3. NO DOUBT IT CAN BE ARGUED THAT SINCE ARRANGEMENTS HAVE BEEN MADE FOR HEARING BY ADMINISTRATIVE LAW JUDGE IN ICA CASE, THERE IS NO INEQUITY AND THEREFORE NO NEED TO TAKE ANY ACTION OTHER THAN THAT ALREADY ENVISAGED. IT HAS BEEN SAID, HOWEVER, THAT JUSTICE DELAYED IS INJUSTICE, AND IT IS CLEAR THAT GOB BELIEVES IT HAS SUFFERED, AND CONTINUES TO SUFFER INJUSTICE WITHIN REGARD TO AIR SERVICE ARRANGEMENTS. BITTERNESS WITH WHICH ARCHER'S REMARKS INFORMED REFLECTS NOT ONLY DISENCHANTMENT WITH HANDLING OF ICA APPLICATION BUT ALSO SUCCESSIVE FRUSTRATIONS OF LAST FIVE YEARS IN OBTAINING BILATERAL AIR SERVICES AGREE-MENT AND SECURING DESIGNATION OF ROUTES. WHATEVER JUSTIFICATION FOR WAY IN WHICH THESE QUESTIONS HANDLED, GOB'S PRESENT TOUGH-NESS CAN HARDLY BE CHARACTERIZED AS WHOLLY WITHOUT FOUNDATION, AND IT SEEMS TO US THAT, GIVEN BARBADIAN SENSITIVITIES, USG SHOULD MAKE EVERY EFFORT TO ENSURE THAT JUSTICE IS NOT ONLY DONE BUT SEEN TO BE DONE IN ICA CASE.

4. WE DO NOT SUGGEST, HOWEVER, THAT MANNER IN WHICH USG DEALS WITH PRESENT SITUATION SHOULD BE DETERMINED SOLELY OR PRIMARILY BY SUCH NEBULOUS, IDEALISTIC CONSIDERATIONS. RATHER, WE CONTEND THAT THESE CONSIDERATIONS ARE A FACTOR TO BE TAKEN INTO ACCOUNT, TOGETHER WITH THE MUCH MORE IMPORTANT AND PRACTICAL CONSIDERATION THAT CONTINUING IN DIRECTION FOLLOWED TO DATE RISKS SERIOUS HARM TO US INTERESTS, WHILE MORE RESPONSIVE STANCE MIGHT AVERT DANGER. GIVEN ITS PERCEPTION OF ITSELF AS THE AGGRIEVED PARTY, GOB IS UNLIKELY TO MAKE ANY CONCESSIONS TO RESOLVE AIR SERVICES DISPUTE. SHOULD BARBADIAN ECONOMY SUFFER AS A RESULT OF ATLA'S WITHHOLDING ISSUANCE OF LICENSE TO AMERICAN, GOB MAY BE EXPECTED PUBLICLY IDENTIFY USG AS THE VILLAIN OF THE PIECE AND TAKE SOME FORM OF RETALIATORY ACTION. SHOULD USG RE-TALIATE IN TURN, CONSEQUENCES WOULD BE LITERALLY INCALCULABLE. WE BELIEVE THAT, LIMITED THOUGH THEY MAY BE, US INTERESTS IN BARBADOS ARE NOT SO UNIMPORTANT THAT THEY SHOULD BE SACRIFICED CARELESSLY.

CONFIDENTIAL

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PAGE 03 BRIDGE 01573 032039Z

5. CASP FOR FY 1976-77 IDENTIFIED US SECURITY AS FOREMOST US INTEREST IN EASTERN CARIBBEAN AND STATED THAT USG HAD STRONG INTEREST IN MAINTAINING CONDITIONS THAT WOULD PERMIT RETENTION OF MILITARY AND NAVAL INSTALLATIONS IN AREA, IN-CLUDING NAVAL FACILITY IN BARBADOS. CASP ALSO TOOK NOTE OF US INTEREST IN PROMOTING US INVESTMENTS IN, AND US EXPORTS TO BARBADOS AND NEIGHBORING ISLANDS. WHILE WE DO NOT WISH TO BE

ALARMIST, DEPARTMENT SHOULD KNOW THAT, IN OUR VIEW, ANY OR ALL OF THESE INTERESTS COULD BE JEOPARDIZED TO A GREATER OR LESSER DEGREE BY PROLONGED DELAY IN PROCESSING OF ICA AND LAKER APPLICATIONS.

6. WE ARE AWARE, AND BELIEVE GOB IS, TOO, THAT CAB MUST CONSIDER CAREFULLY QUESTION WHETHER ICA IS SUBSTANTIALLY OWNED AND EFFECTIVELY CONTROLLED BY BARBADIAN NATIONALS. GOB, HOWEVER, SEES NO REAL PROGRESS BEING MADE TOWARD EXAMINATION OF THIS OR ANY OTHER ISSUE BUT ONLY PROCESS OF INDETERMINATE LENGTH WITH UNCERTAIN RESULT WHICH, MOREOVER, IT REGARDS AS RESULT OF -- AT BEST -- INDIFFERENCE TO BARBADIAN CONCERNS. FOR OUR PART, WE ARE UNIMPRESSED BY LINE THAT CAB PROCEDURES MUST BE ALLOWED TO RUN THEIR COURSE COME WHAT MAY AND STRONGLY URGE THAT DEPARTMENT, IN RECOGNITION OF FOREIGN POLICY INTERESTS NOTED ABOVE, SEEK TO IMPRESS UPON CAB IMPORTANCE OF OBVIATING NEEDLESS ACRIMONY BY SPEEDING UP CONSIDERATION OF ICA AND LAKER APPLICATIONS.
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